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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3257  
INFO RUEHSS/OECD POSTS COLLECTIVE  
RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 001633

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SP](#) [ECON](#) [ELTN](#) [EIND](#) [OVIP](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL BROWN DISCUSSES TRAIN INFRASTRUCTURE AND  
SECURITY IN SPAIN

¶1. (U) Summary. During a visit to Spain August 13-15, Congresswomen Corrine Brown (D-FL), Grace Napolitano (D-CA), and Stephanie Tubbs-Jones (D-OH) discussed railway security and investment with Spanish Congressional officials and railroad representatives. Spanish parliamentarians from the Chamber of Deputies Committee on Infrastructure told the CODEL that Spain planned to invest more than 150 billion euros over the next decade to expand the role of railways in the Spanish economy. Spain's National Network of Railways (RENFE) separately provided the CODEL with a tour of Madrid's Atocha station (where the March 11, 2004 bombing took place) as well as of the Zaragoza-Delicias train station, which will serve as a major transportation hub for the Zaragoza 2008 exposition. During the tours, RENFE officials admitted that though they considered the train stations' security measures to be robust, the measures currently in place could not definitively prevent another March 11-type train station attack. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On August 14, parliamentarians from Spain's Chamber of Deputies Committee on Infrastructure explained to CODEL Brown that investment in the railways was a top GOS priority. Of a projected 10-year infrastructure budget of 250 billion euros, almost 70 percent will be invested in railways, a significant portion of which (125 billion euros) is for the expansion of Spain's high speed train lines (AVE). The parliamentarians explained that Spain's railway authority (RENFE) would be adding high-speed routes to the north and extending already-existing southern rail lines. Of particular importance, they noted, was the long-awaited construction of the AVE line connecting two of the most important economic centers, Barcelona and Madrid, to be completed by the end of 2007. In addition to the enormous investment in the AVE lines, the parliamentarians mentioned that Spain would invest 32 billion euros of the projected infrastructure funds towards Spain's commuter rail line system in addition to unspecified amounts to improve train stations.

¶3. (U) Parliamentarian Maria Dolores Puig Gasol (Barcelona, PSOE) commented that this remarkable investment would improve Spain's lagging position in rail transport within the EU. She noted that only 2 percent of travel and freight transportation in Spain was being provided by railways compared with 14 percent in the EU. Parliamentarian and Deputy of the Infrastructure Committee, Jose Joaquin Martinez (Cantabria, Partido Popular), added that improved rail transport would open up more of the country to commerce and travel, both domestically and with Portugal and France, and would provide greater development opportunities to traditionally neglected localities.

¶4. (U) In addition to their meeting with Spanish parliamentarians, the CODEL met with officials from the National Network for Spanish Railways (RENFE). RENFE provided the CODEL with separate tours of Madrid's Atocha station and the Zaragoza-Delicias train station two hours

north of Madrid. RENFE officials showcased their extensive video-camera surveillance procedures and explained that both stations relied on the presence of both police and canines to prevent attacks. Although RENFE security advisors praised the existing security measures, they admitted that the measures could not definitively prevent passengers from bringing explosives or deadly weapons aboard trains, similar to what occurred during the March 11, 2004 terrorist attack at Atocha station that killed 191 persons and injured thousands more.

¶5. (U) The RENFE officials acknowledged that although passengers traveling on the high speed AVE train must place their baggage through an x-ray machine, these passengers were not subject to searches of their person and could theoretically hide material under their clothing. Additionally, RENFE representatives explained that passengers traveling on the commuter trains or "cercanias" were not subject to baggage x-rays. RENFE officials cautioned, however, that there was a fine line between imposing additional security measures and making rail travel inconvenient for passengers, and asserted that the measures currently in place made the two stations very difficult targets for would-be attackers.

¶6. (U) RENFE's biggest security hurdle, the security officials opined, was not its system of searches, but the lack of uniform security measures at train stations across the country. Tomas del Riego Minco, Chief of Security for RENFE-ADIF, explained that the security measures imposed at Atocha and Zaragoza were unique and not applied to all stations country-wide, making these other stations easier targets. He added that Spanish laws limiting the use of video surveillance footage was another hindrance that impeded

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long-term surveillance and intel capabilities of the operations centers at Atocha and Zaragoza-Delicias stations.

¶7. (U) Comment: Though RENFE security officials admit to gaps in security measures, they expressed confidence that the measures currently in place at the prominent train stations serve as a sufficient deterrent to prevent future attacks. In fact, surveillance at both Atocha and Zaragoza stations was extremely thorough and left little to the imagination. In addition to security, expansion of the rail lines is a significant priority for Spain. The GOS is placing remarkable emphasis on the development of its rail lines, going so far as to commit the majority of its projected infrastructure funding to this end. In comparison, Spain is only committing 6 percent of its infrastructure budget to air transportation improvements and 25 percent to road transportation.

¶8. (U) RENFE is a governmental agency that reports to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Works. The agency is divided into two segments, RENFE ADIF which oversees train stations and infrastructure of the railways, and RENFE Operations which manages the rail trains and passenger issues. In 2009, Spain will begin the process of privatization of its trains as mandated by the EU. At that point RENFE Operations will reduce some of its current responsibilities, while RENFE ADIF will maintain its standing as the manager of the railway lines and infrastructure.  
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